

INTELLOFAX 16

## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## INFORMATION REPORT

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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Roads

1. Roads and highways were badly neglected during the war, and remained in that condition for a long time afterwards. Even the main roads, which were asphalt surfaced, had become pot-holed and difficult to negotiate. During the last couple of years, major repairs have been carried out, and the paved highways are now in a more or less reasonable condition. The so-called "first-class" roads are still in a bad state of repair, and during the spring and autumn are difficult to travel on. Especially bad are the roads in Kurzeme from Tukums to Kuldiga, and from Lepaya to Ventspils and Yelgava. The Lepaya - Saldus - Dobeles road is at the moment being rebuilt as a highway, and the highway from Riga to Lubana is also being rebuilt. Reconstruction has been completed on the road along the sea from Riga to Ainazi, which used to be extremely dangerous. A beautiful highway has been built through the forest, parallel with the road from Majori to Bulduri. No other roads have been built. There exist plans to straighten the Valmiera road and by-pass Cesis. For some time already, commissions have been studying how to straighten the Vidzeme highway, which has some notably dangerous curves.
2. The roads and highways are under the Highway and Road Administration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Farmers are employed as laborers on the roads, as a form of compulsory service. The maintenance of smaller roads and bridges is the entire responsibility of the farmers, and is usually carried out in the spring, after sowing has been completed. The condition of secondary and third-class roads is often such that cars can travel on them only at very low speed and only during the dry season.

Road Bridges

3. The bridges across the river Gauja at Sigulda and Cesis, which were destroyed during the war, have been rebuilt, also the Vienibas bridge in Daugavpils, and

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the bridges near Jekabpils and Yelgava. The highway bridge across the river Amata is now under reconstruction. Most of the bridges had been only temporarily repaired, and are only now being permanently reconstructed. Road traffic in Riga is carried by a pontoon bridge and the wooden bridge at the end of Valdemara iela. The latter is not expected to last much longer, and it is planned to replace it with a new bridge.

#### Riga Bus Services

4. The bus services have undoubtedly been greatly extended. There are some 25 bus routes operating from Riga to various terminals - Rujiena, Ape, Aluksne, Mazsalaca, Vecpiebalga, Ainazi, Aloja, Baldone, Nereta, Ilukste, Bauska, Joniski, Yelgava, Tervete, Viesite, Kalnciems, Kuldiga, Talsi, Dundaga, Ventspils, Lepaya, Daugavpils, etc. The comfortable ZIS-155 buses are used mostly and are kept by all the Riga transport depots. The number of passengers carried is large, and tickets are sold with priority for persons having komandirovki. The fares are quite expensive, the lowest being 10 rubles for 40 kms. A fare of 20 rubles is charged for 100-120 kms, with an increase for every subsequent 10 kms. For example, a ticket from Riga to Aluksne costs 32 rubles.
5. There are altogether 113 bus routes in Latvia, covering a total distance of approximately 8,000 kms. Nearly every rayon center has its own bus line, for example, from Kuldiga to Ventspils, Saldus, Skrunda, and Stende; from Cesis to Ranka and Straupe, etc. Old buses are usually employed for traffic in the rural districts.

#### Auto Transport

6. The State auto transport organization is divided into separate auto transport offices, factory and company buses, and kolkhoz auto administrations. The number of trucks has greatly increased during the last few years, especially on the kolkhozy. Nearly every kolkhoz owns one or two trucks, the bigger ones having even three or four. In factories and companies, the number of trucks depends on the type of work and the size of the undertaking. The condition of trucks has improved, in comparison with the first years after the war. About 50 percent of those now in use are less than three years old. The life of a truck is not expected to be very long, since drivers are not careful with them. If a truck is no longer fit for service, it is put on a scrapheap and the State provides a new one. There are car repair workshops in Riga, Lepaya, and Daugavpils, but, in accordance with general practice, "repairs are done for kopeks, and bills presented are for thousands of rubles". The authorities and the State Control are striving to keep the cars in good repair, but with very little result. The only thing drivers fear is the auto inspection under the militia administration. The "flying controllers" appear in uniform or in civilian clothes in one or another part of the town, or on the highways, stopping cars and, particularly, trucks. They check the documentation of the vehicle and the various movement orders and certificates, note driving offences, and even refuse to permit the vehicle to proceed if it is not up to the required technical standards. It is not difficult to have one's driving license confiscated; and, if one is involved in an accident, a prison sentence is assured.

#### Economy Drive

7. As in all other walks of life, the Soviet authorities have introduced a movement for economy into road transport, which is called, "lowering the self-cost of transporting goods". Gasoline is then economized, and repair costs reduced. There are drivers who have effected savings of approximately 15,000 rubles and received bonuses for doing so. Nobody cares about the gasoline, since it is provided by the State, and it is poured around as if it were water. Much of it is diverted to other purposes or sold on the side at 1 - 1.50 rubles a liter. There is now a trend to keep a stricter check on gasoline, and an example is that of the bus undertakings, which saved 40,000 liters of gasoline in the last half year (January - June 1952).

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### Trucks

8. There are no longer private trucks in Latvia, as they have all been nationalized. For the ordinary needs of the population, there are the so-called "goods taxis". It is very doubtful whether the truckdriver exists who would not earn a little on the side by taking an extra passenger or some goods. This is called haliuras, and movement orders with prescribed routes are ineffective against it, as the driver is always able to make a small detour. At one time, there were checkpoints on all the main roads leading into Riga, which checked up on all travellers; now they check trucks mostly.

### Cars

9. Passenger cars can be divided into State-owned and privately-owned cars. Most of the State-owned cars are allotted to Party secretaries, ministers, directors, and other officials and even provided with a chauffeur. In Riga, they are mostly the Pobeda, but lesser officials in rural districts must be satisfied with the Moskvich. These two makes of car account for about 90 percent of all cars. During the last twelve months, the new ZIM models have appeared in Riga, and are destined for the "Big Comrades". The State also owns the taxis (Pobeda) in Riga, and in the bigger provincial towns. Fares are 2 rubles per km.
10. The number of privately-owned cars has risen steeply during the last few years. About 80 percent of them are the Moskvich, and people have started to buy the Pobeda only recently. Car owners are for the most part the scientific and artistic workers and other experts, factory engineers, skilled craftsmen, qualified workers, and fishermen. Of late, one or two kolkhoz officials have started to acquire Moskvich cars. A Moskvich costs from 8,500 - 9,000 rubles, a Pobeda 15,500 - 16,000 rubles. There are no restrictions on buying a car, but it must be mentioned that there is a waiting list in Riga for Moskvich cars, and it takes about six months to obtain delivery. The auto inspection pays little attention to private cars, and so long as the driver is not intoxicated or guilty of a traffic offense, he is safe from the inspectors. Otherwise, his license is temporarily suspended.

### Streetcars and Buses

11. The mainstay of public transport in Riga is the streetcars. Although there is an industry in Riga which produces streetcars, few of them can be seen in use. Most of the cars are the old Latvian ones, or motorcars sent from Moscow and Leningrad. Altogether, there are about 300 cars. The streetcar engines have been considerably improved, and travelling speed is much greater than before. The streetcar lines in Riga have recently been completely reorganized. The former Circle Line no longer exists. For example, the No. 1 line goes from Bikernieku iela to Ilguciems, No. 2 from Brasas Station to Zasulauks, No. 3 from the former Kuznecova Factory to Bikernieku iela, No. 4 from Petersalas iela to Grizinkalns, No. 5 from Sarkandaugava to Tornakalns, No. 6 from Jugla to the former Latvijas Banka, etc. New lines have been built from Smerli to Jugla, along Pernavas iela and along the whole length of Kr. Barona iela. There are no longer streetcar lines along Brivibas (now Lenina) iela, Kalpaka (now Komunaru) Bulvaris, and Plkv. Brieza (now Sverdlova) iela. These lines now run on Kr. Barona and Eksporta ielas. Unused streetcar rails have been taken up and transport is maintained by trolleybuses. There are altogether four trolleybus routes serviced by some 35 trolleybuses, which ply from the main railroad station to the former Zemitana Laukums (Zemitana station has now been renamed Oskalni) between Meza Parks and Samarina (now Lomonosova) iela, and also from Daugavpils iela to Petersalas iela. Bus services to the suburbs of Riga, for example, Brivdabas Museum, Imanta, Pleskodals, Bierini, Purvciems, Milgravis, Vecaki, Ciekurkalns, Jaunciems, Boldefaja, etc. are maintained by ZIS-155 buses. There is a total of about 40 of these buses. Fare on streetcars is 30 kopeks; on trolleybuses there are various fare-stages from 20 to 60 kopeks, and on buses from 1-2 rubles. Passenger traffic operates from 0600 until 0100 at night. As a rule, passenger vehicles are not overcrowded, except at the time when work finishes and on football days. During 1951, the streetcars carried 150,000,000 passengers. There are also streetcar lines in Lepaya and Daugavpils, three in each town.

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